

British Theatre Guide

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Beautiful Evil Things

Deborah Pugh and George Mann

Ad Infinitum

Tobacco Factory Theatres

18–22 October 2022

A retelling of classical Greek mythology is one thing, but a retelling through the eyes of the Gorgon Medusa, notorious for turning anyone into stone with one glance, is guaranteed to put you on the edge of your seat.

In this one-woman show, Deborah Pugh takes us on a nerve-tingling romp through the Trojan Wars, and more. Adding lesser-known myths to those in the classical canon, we are invited to look at these famous stories through the eyes of the female protagonists.

Pugh is a mesmerising performer. Hugely energetic and vocally dextrous, she produces a compelling *tour de force* as she shifts almost faultlessly from one character and scene to another in this short 70-minute production which she also co-created with director George Mann.

Revisionist versions of *Medea* have already invited to us to sympathetically consider the context which led her to infanticide and review our opinions despite her shocking actions. This time, we are asked to reconsider the actions of Medusa, Cassandra and Penthesilea and more. These women have been, wronged and punished by the gods, husbands, men and society in the classical myths. In other versions, they have been presented as heroic or victims of injustice but these stories have been mostly overlooked, misrepresented, or not even heard. It's a provocative evening, with the added frisson of Medusa's vengeful gaze being turned on the audience.

Ad Infinitum's decision to keep to a stripped-back, bare stage, using dramatic light and sound, and not much more than an electric cable on stage leaves Pugh with a lot to do. Almost too much to keep all the senses fully engaged even in such a short show. But it is nevertheless a compelling piece of storytelling with an outstanding performance from Pugh.

Reviewer: [Joan Phillips](#)